

To: Public Health Committee
From: Joni Arvai, Director of Government Relations
American Heart Association
Re: **HB 6843 An Act Concerning Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programs**
Date: January 31, 2007

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and members of the Public Health Committee. On behalf of the American Heart Association, I urge you to support funding for community based physical activity prevention programs as outlined in HB 6843, AAC Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programs.

We know that heart disease is Connecticut's leading cause of death and that stroke is the State's No. 3 killer. The good news is that the overall numbers of deaths due to CVD have diminished over the last few years. However, the extremely bad news is that all of these gains will be wiped out if we don't take immediate action to reduce the prevalence of CVD factors in this state. Outside of the reduction of the number of smokers and tobacco users, the prevalence of just about every other major modifiable risk factor for heart disease and stroke has increased in Connecticut. Did you know ...

- 80 percent of adults in Connecticut have no regular physical activity, while 27 percent are completely sedentary;
- More than half of Connecticut's adults are overweight, while nearly 20 percent are obese. Since 1991, obesity rates in Connecticut have doubled.;
- 24 percent of Connecticut adults have high blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke;
- Nearly 28 percent of Connecticut's adults display 3 or more risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

These numbers should jolt all of us into action. We have to address these problem statistics, because we are starting to see these risk factors develop in our children. We know that obesity is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but it also has negative influence on the development of other risk factors, like high blood pressure, diabetes and physical inactivity.

What HB 6843 does:

Allocates \$500,000 to the Connecticut Department of Health for the purpose of establishing community based physical activity programs to prevent and reduce the incidence of CVD and obesity among children and adults. *I have also provided substitute language that I would ask that you review.*

Why this bill is needed:

- In Connecticut, cardiovascular diseases account for 11,000 deaths each year, 6,000 of which are women.
- In 2006, it is estimated that heart disease and stroke will cost the residents of Connecticut **\$4.7 billion dollars**. This figure includes direct costs of health expenditures and indirect costs of lost productivity resulting from illness, death and disability.
- More of the nation's workforce is in sedentary occupations, which leads to physical inactivity, which leads to greater risk for heart disease and stroke.
- The creation of local physical activity programs would go a long way in improving the lives of children and adults. Adults gain two hours of life expectancy for each hour of regular exercise, even if they don't begin exercising until middle age.
- Connecticut receives only \$700,000 from federal dollars for Heart Disease and Stroke programs. The current focus of the HDSP program is not on physical activity prevention programs.

This current generation of children is the first in American history predicted to have a shorter life span than their parents. Why...because the childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed, especially in our state. With the cost of health care on the rise it is imperative that we seek out preventive measures. I thank the committee for their time and consideration and would welcome the opportunity for questions.

Proposed Substitute Language for

**RB 6843 AN ACT CONCERNING CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
PREVENTION PROGRAMS.**

***An Act Concerning Physical Activity for the Prevention of
Cardiovascular Disease and Obesity***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective upon passage) The Commissioner of Public Health shall establish and administer a program to provide grants to municipalities for the purpose of developing community based physical activity programs to prevent or reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease and obesity among children and adults, within participating municipalities. The Commissioner shall issue a Request for Proposals to the municipalities no later than October 1, 2007 for funding from January 1, 2008 through July 31, 2009. No grant shall exceed \$50,000. In awarding such grants, the Department shall attempt to distribute funding across varied demographic groups. Any proposal submitted shall (1) include a community assessment in support of the proposal and a detailed plan for program evaluation and the collection of outcomes data (2) demonstrate community involvement which shall include formation of a community-based advisory committee comprised of traditional and non-traditional partners to oversee the implementation and evaluation components and (3) provide for dissemination of information to the public regarding the availability program and creation of public awareness regarding the health benefits of the program. In awarding such grants, the Department shall give priority to those municipalities that have provided for matching funds or other funding sources for the project in addition to the grant.

Sec. 2. (Effective July 1, 2007) The sum of five hundred thousand dollars is appropriated to the Department of Public Health, from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, for the grant program authorized under section 1 of this act for community based physical activity programs.